Mary Magdalene between East and West

Cult and Image, Relics and Politics in the
Late Thirteenth-Century Eastern Mediterranean

VASSILIKI A. FOSKOLOU

Among the Sinai Crusader icons is a Crucifixion dating to the late thirteenth century, in which one woman in the entourage of the Virgin is given special emphasis (fig. 1).[1] She is depicted apart from the other women, lamenting with arms aloft. She wears a bright red maphorion, from under which her long fair hair is escaping, and a tunic with a plunging neckline that exposes her chest. These features permit us to recognize the figure of Mary Magdalene as *beata peccatrix*, or blessed sinner, through her identification with the woman who washed the feet of Christ with her tears and dried them with her hair (Luke 7:36–38).[2]

Identifying Mary Magdalene with the anonymous sinner of St. Luke's Gospel is an entirely Western

religious tradition. The few biblical references to the Magdalene merely tell us that she joined the group of women who followed Christ after he had cast out her seven demons (Mark 16:9, Luke 8:2), and that she was present at the Crucifixion and the Entombment (Matt. 27:55–56, 27:61, Mark 15:40–41, 15:47, John 19:25). The Gospels also inform us that she brought ointments to the tomb and that she, as the first to see the risen Christ, was the one who brought the news to the disciples (Matt. 28:1–10, Mark 16:1–11; Luke 24:1–10; John 20:1–18).[3] In the West, these meager details were combined in Gospel commentaries with the similarly basic biblical references to Mary, the sister of Lazaros, and to the unnamed sinner, which led to the merging of the three women's identities. This composite identity of the Magdalene appears in Latin theological writings from as early as the late sixth century. Later it decisively influenced the hagiographical texts relating to the Magdalene and her depiction in Western art.[4] Yet it is important to note not only that no association among these three people from the Gospel narrative

1 H. C. Evans, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (New Haven and London, 2004), no. 224, pp. 367–68 with earlier bibliography.

2 On Mary Magdalene as *beata peccatrix* in Western theology and thought see S. Haskins, *Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor* (London, 1993), 134–91.

3 For the references to Mary Magdalene in the gospels, see summary in K. Ludwig-Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 2000), 21–24 and Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 5–11.

4 On the cult of the Magdalene in the West, see the summary in V. Saxer, "Maria Magdalena," *LMA* 6:282–83, and for more detail: V. Saxer, *Le culte de Marie Madeleine en Occident des origines à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1959). For the composite Western saint, see also Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 3–32 and Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 32–35.

Crucifixion Icon, Monastery of
St. Catherine, Mt. Sinai. Photo
courtesy of the monastery

was accepted in Byzantine theology, but that, as will
become clear, the concept of the Magdalene as a sinner
is likely to have been almost unknown in Byzantium.[5]

Though the cult of the composite saint had con-
siderable success in the West in the eleventh and twelfth
centuries, it was in Italy from the thirteenth century
onward that the aspect of the repentant sinner was
particularly emphasized. This may be connected with

the important penitential position Mary Magdalene
acquired in the teaching of the mendicant orders.[6]

In art, this development is mirrored in the appear-
ance of a new iconographic type, that of the penitent
hermit, which depicts the Magdalene with her long hair
covering her naked body.[7] One of the earliest examples

5 V. Saxer, "Les Saintes Marie Madeleine et Marie de Béthanie
dans la tradition liturgique et homilétique orientale," *RSR* 32 (1958):
1–37. See also "Mary Magdalene," *ODB* 2:1310.

6 On the Magdalene as penitent sinner in the mendicant orders,
see Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, esp. 199–244.

7 According to some art historians, the iconographic type seems
to have been created in Umbria under Franciscan influence: "Maria
Magdalena," *LChrI* 7:519 (M. Anstett-Janssen), M. Ingenhoff-
Dahnäuser, *Maria Magdalena: Heilige und Sünderin in der ital-
ienischen Renaissance* (Tübingen, 1984), 7–8. It is based on the *vita*

of this image is found in the *vita* icon of the saint in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence, a work which provides important evidence of her cult in Italy at that time (ca. 1280; fig. 2).[8] It is the first known depiction of the composite saint in art that gives equal weight to all three gospel figures, bringing them together in the one persona.[9] At the same time, the text on her scroll emphasizes penance and, by extension, salvation.[10] It declares the Magdalene a symbol of hope for sinners and an example to be followed, ideas that recall the preaching of the mendicant orders.[11]

eremitica, which emerges in southern Italy in the 9th c., and according to which the Magdalene withdrew to the desert for 30 years after Christ's Ascension. Later this *Life* was combined with the *vita apostolica*, created in France in order to explain the existence of her relics and cult in Burgundy. This synthesis became the basic hagiographical text for St. Mary Magdalene in the West. According to the *vita apostolica*, once she had preached the gospel in Provence and converted the Gauls to Christianity, she retreated to a cave, where she lived an ascetic life of privation and prayer. After her death she was buried in the church of Saint Maximin. However, in the 8th c. her relics were translated to Vézelay in Burgundy to escape the attacks of the Saracens; see a summary with relevant bibliography in V. Saxer, "Santa Maria Maddalena della storia evangelica alla leggenda e all'arte," in M. Mosco, ed., *La Maddalena tra Sacro e Profano: Da Giotto a De Chirico* (Florence and Milan, 1986), 24–26; Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 36–40.

8   M. Boskovits and A. Tartuferi, *Cataloghi della Galleria dell'Accademia di Firenze: Dipinti, Volume Primo: Dal Duecento a Giovanni da Milano* (Florence, 2003), 151–56.

9   To be specific, in the life cycle that surrounds the central portrait of the saint, three gospel scenes are depicted: the Washing of the Feet of Christ, the Raising of Lazaros, and the *Noli me tangere*, each corresponding to one of the three personas; see the relevant entry in the exhibition catalogue *La Maddalena tra Sacro e Profano*, no. 2, 43–45; Boskovits and Tartuferi, *Cataloghi*, 151. It is important to note that the slightly earlier cycles of her life in French stained glass from the end of the 12th c.—though more extensive, as for example in the cathedral at Chartres—do not stress the aspect of the anonymous sinner, but emphasize Mary Magdalene as sister of Lazaros and her role after the Resurrection; see C. Deremble, "Les premiers cycles d'images consacrés à Marie Madeleine," *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome: Moyen Age* 104/1 (1992): 187–208. Similarly, in individual portraits of the saint up to this time the type of the myrrophore predominates, i.e., the female figure in classical dress, who is usually holding a pot of myrrh (see *LChrI* 7:518; Deremble, "Premiers cycles," 188).

10   "Ne desperetis vos qui peccare soletis. Exemploque meo vos reparate Deo" ("Do not despair, those of you who are accustomed to sin. By my example return yourselves to God"); on the text see Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 233–34.

11   J. Cannon, "Beyond the Limitations of Visual Typology: Reconsidering the Function and Audience of Three *Vita* Panels of
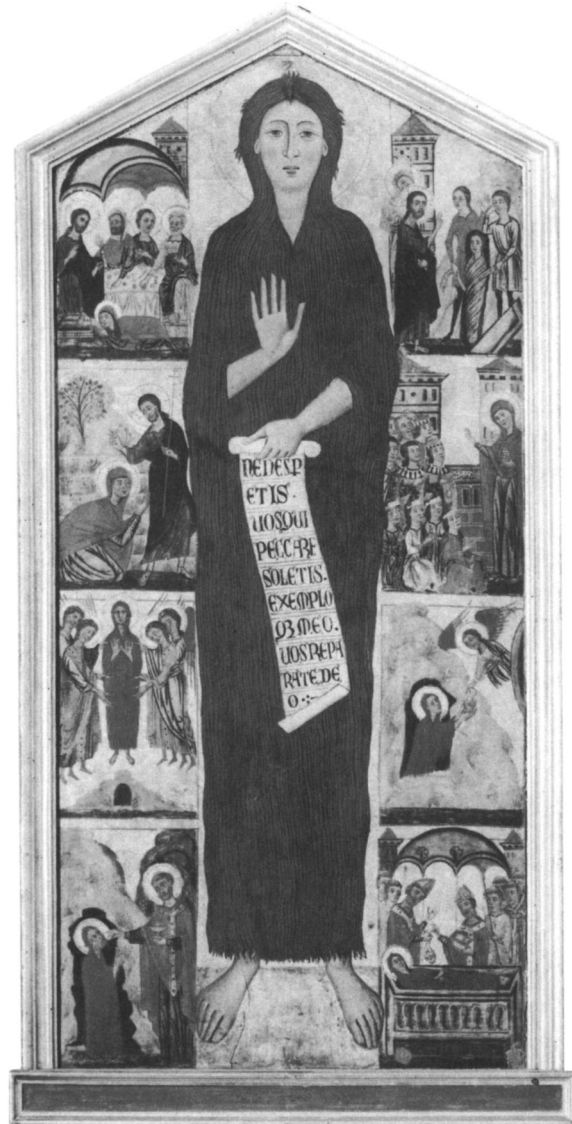
FIG. 2   Magdalene Master, Vita icon of Mary Magdalene (ca. 1280), Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence. Photo courtesy of the museum

At around the same time, that is, from the mid-thirteenth century and particularly from the 1280s, the Magdalene stands out in scenes of the Passion in Italian art because of the intensity with which her sorrow is depicted. This imagery has been associated with the special devotion the Franciscans showed her. The

Women Saints c. 1300," in *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, ed. V. Schmidt (Washington, DC, 2002), 301–2. Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 231–35.

dramatic narrations of her participation in the events of the Passion in texts written by important figures in the order are consistent with this view.[12] In fact, the earliest examples of the subject are seen in Franciscan commissions, and the saint occupies a special place in the monumental wall painting of the Crucifixion by Cimabue (1277–80) in the upper basilica of San Francesco at Assisi. Here, as in the Crusader icon from Sinai, she stands out, raising her arms beside the crucified Christ in a heartrending gesture of lamentation.[13]

The Magdalene played a leading role in the preaching and the religious life of the Franciscans. She and St. Francis were models of penitence and of the contemplative life that leads to spiritual rebirth. This central idea governs the iconographic program of the Magdalene Chapel in the Lower Basilica at Assisi (1319–29), the dedication of which is yet further evidence of the impact she had within the order.[14]

The central importance of penitence in Franciscan ideology is also evident in the iconographic motif of the Magdalene or St. Francis venerating the crucified Christ. From the end of the thirteenth century, they both appear kneeling in *proskynesis* at the foot of the cross, a depiction that reveals the many connections between them (fig. 3).[15] It is no coincidence that in the above-mentioned scenes of Magdalene venerating the cross, she appears with the attributes of her sinful life: the long fair hair, often worn loose, and the bright red dress.[16] The same features gradually make her stand
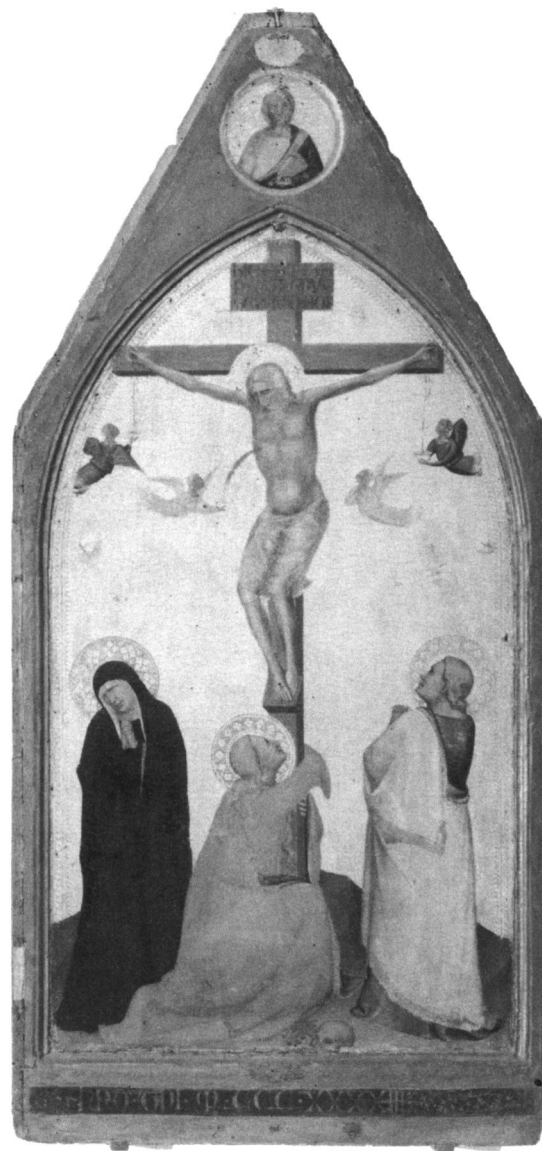

FIG. 3   Bernado Daddi, Crucifixion (1343), Galleria dell' Accademia, Florence. Photo courtesy of the museum

out in the other scenes of the Passion too, where she is depicted in broken-hearted mourning.[17] On the one hand the semiotic references to her sinful past refer to

12   A. Derbes, "Byzantine Art and the Dugento: Iconographic Sources of the Passion Scenes in Italian Painted Crosses" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1980), 243–44, 329–31. See also A. Derbes and A. Neff, "Italy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Byzantine Sphere," in *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, 460 and n. 93. For the relevant references in Franciscan texts, see also Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 90–91.

13   H. Belting, *Die Oberkirche von San Francesco in Assisi* (Berlin, 1977), fig. 40.

14   L. Schwartz, "Patronage and Franciscan Iconography in the Magdalen Chapel at Assisi," *The Burlington Magazine* 133 (1991): 32–36.

15   K. Neil, "St. Francis of Assisi, the Penitent Magdalen, and the Patron at the Foot of the Cross," *Rutgers Art Review* 9–10 (1988–89): 83–110.

16   See, for example, E. B. Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index* (London, 1998), CD-ROM, no. 298 (Guido da Siena, 1266–1285), no. 562 (follower of Cimabue, 1280–90). See also slightly later examples, in *La Maddalena tra Sacro e Profano*, 102, figs. 1–2, 105, no. 26 (Pietro Lorenzetti, 1322–1325);

Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 93, fig. 14, 94, fig. 15. On the semiology of the saint's hair as an instrument of seduction and by extension of sin and repentance, see Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 153–4; Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 130–2, 157–8.

17   Garrison, *Index*, no. 347 ("Clarisse master," 1267–1300), no. 348 (North Umbrian School, 1266–85), no. 657 (follower of Cimabue, 1295–1305), no. 264 (Venetian, 1320–1340).
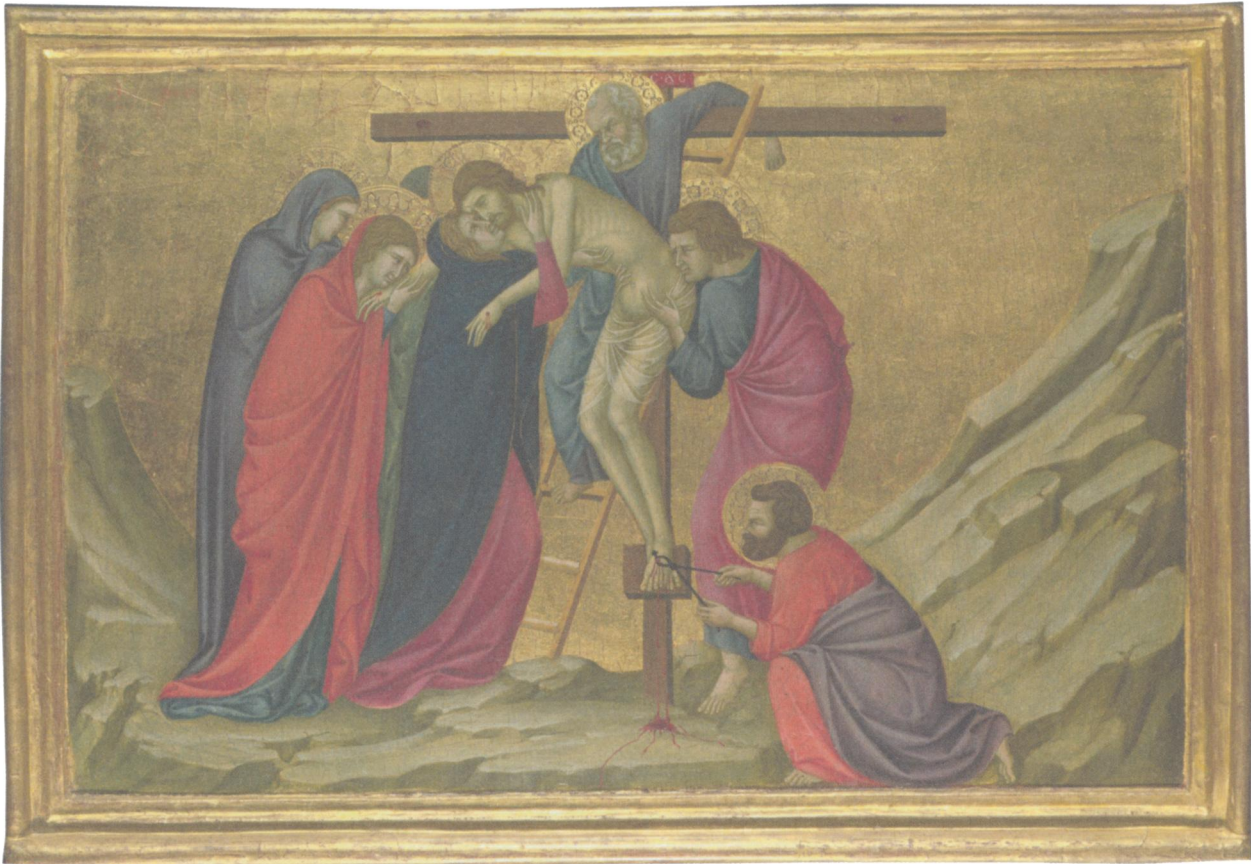
FIG. 4   Ugolino di Nerio, The Deposition (1320–1324), The National Gallery, London. Photo courtesy of the museum

the concept of penitence, and on the other they render the Magdalene a person with whom the viewer can identify. As a repentant sinner in scenes of the Passion she stands out as a humble and at the same time virtuous model to be imitated by the faithful, just as in the *vita* icon in Florence, and she is thus displayed as a pictorial "vehicle" for the basic tenets of Franciscan teaching (fig. 4).[18]

This brief overview confirms the suggestion that the figure of the mourning myrrophore in the Sinai icon, identified with the sinner Magdalene, should be classed among the Western iconographic subjects that the mendicant orders imported into the Latin kingdoms of the Levant.[19] Furthermore, it reveals the special ideological baggage that accompanies this image.

18   On the *imitatio Magdalenae* as humble model of spiritual devotion see Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 91–96.

19   The suggestion was made in Derbes and Neff, "Italy, the Mendicant Orders," n. 93. It should be noted that the Sinai icon

The Mourning Myrrophore in Byzantine Examples

At around the same time—toward the end of the thirteenth century—the Byzantine iconography of the Passion, as well, began to emphasize the lament of one of the Virgin's companions. In the Lamentation, the myrrophores are transferred to the foreground of the throng surrounding the central theme, and one of them stands out from the group by virtue of her dramatic stance.[20] Whether on the edge or at the center of the scene, she raises her arms in a theatrical gesture of

presents other iconographic features connected with the Franciscans; see A. Derbes, "Siena and the Levant in the Later Dugento," *Gesta* 28, no. 2 (1989): 190–204, esp. 197.

20   On the iconography of the subject in general, see I. Spatharakis, "The Influence of the Lithos in the Development of the Iconography of the Threnos," in *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. D. Mouriki et al. (Princeton, 1995), 435–41, with earlier bibliography.

lamentation or she tears out her hair as an expression of intense mourning,[21] as for instance in the scene in the refectory of the monastery of St. John on Patmos[22] and at the Olympiotissa in Elassona (after 1296),[23] St. Nicholas, Prilep (1298),[24] the church of Christ in Berroia (1315),[25] and St. Niketas in Čučer (ca. 1320) (figs. 5–6).[26] In a more elegant but equally emphatic manner, the presence of one of the myrrophores is given special emphasis in this scene in the exonarthex of the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos (1312), where, unable to restrain her anguish, she appears to collapse and be supported by her two companions.[27] It is important to note that, though in certain Lamentation scenes the group of wailing women becomes more crowded at this time, a certain figure is always prominent as the only one standing erect with her arms in the air, usually at the center of the scene behind the Virgin, as for

FIG. 5   Lamentation, Refectory of St. John's monastery on Patmos. Photo after *Οι Θησαυροί της Μονής Πάτμου* (Athens, 1988), 96, fig. 37

example at the Peribleptos church in Ohrid (1295),[28] the Chilandar monastery on Mount Athos (1320–21),[29] and the SS. Theodore church in Mistra.[30]

In similar fashion, one of the myrrophores stands out in the scene of the Deposition.[31] In the iconography

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21   On the significance of these gestures as a sign of mourning, see H. Maguire, "The Depiction of Sorrow in Middle Byzantine Art," *DOP* 31 (1977): 126–32, 159–60.

22   *Οι Θησαυροί της Μονής Πάτμου*, ed. A. D. Komines (Athens, 1988), 96, fig. 37. The layer of wall paintings to which the scene belongs has been dated by E. Kollias to the last quarter of the 13th c.: ibid., 66 and 368 n. 12.

23   E. C. Constantinides, *The Wall Paintings of the Panagia Olympiotissa at Elasson in Northern Thessaly* (Athens, 1992), 1:126–28, 2: pl. 42.

24   G. Millet and A. Frolow, *La peinture du moyen âge en Yougoslavie* (Paris, 1962), 3: pl. 26.1. On the church and its wall paintings, see. P. Miljković-Pepek, "Sur la chronologie de l'église de Saint Nicolas à Varoš près de Prilep," in *Studien zur byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte: Festschrift für H. Hallensleben zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. B. Borkopp, B. Schellewald, and L. Theis (Amsterdam, 1995), 73–84.

25   The figure, though now destroyed from the waist up, was depicted standing apart from the other women at the center of the scene, lamenting with arms raised, as can be seen from her open maphorion: S. Pelekanides, *Καλλιέργης όλης Θετταλίας άριστος ζωγράφος*, 2nd ed. (Athens, 1994), 57, fig. 28.

26   Millet and Frolow, *Yougoslavie*, 3: pl. 37.2. On the church and its wall paintings, the work of the painters Michael Astrapas and Eutychios, see. B. Todić, *Serbian Medieval Painting: The Age of King Milutin* (Belgrade, 1999), 343–46, with earlier bibliography.

27   E. N. Tsigaridas, "Τα ψηφιδωτά και οι βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες," in *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου: Παράδοση—Ιστορία—Τέχνη* (Mount Athos, 1996), 1:265, fig. 224. On the dating see ibid., 277–79 and E. N. Tsigaridas, "Οι τοιχογραφίες του καθολικού της μονής Βατοπεδίου," in *Βυζάντιο και Σερβία κατά τον ΙΔ' αιώνα,* Institute for Byzantine Research International Symposium 3 (Athens, 1996), 401–25.

28   Millet and Frolow, *Yougoslavie*, 3: pl. 9.3. The motif of the myrrophore with arms raised achieved such popularity that it also appears in works of the minor arts, such as steatite panels, which due to their tiny dimensions were always limited to the basic iconographic features of their subject: I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, *Byzantine Icons in Steatite*, ByzVindo 15, no. 1 (Vienna, 1985), 193, no. 118.

29   G. Millet, *Monuments de l'Athos* (Paris, 1927), pl. 67.1. The scene has been overpainted, but the later version follows the original iconographic scheme: see Todić, *Serbian Medieval Painting*, 351–56, esp. 353.

30   G. Millet, *Monuments byzantins de Mistra* (Paris, 1910), pl. 88.2.

31   On the iconography of this subject, see G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Evangile aux XIVe, XVe et XVIe siècles* (Paris, 1916), 467–88; G. Millet, "L'art des Balkans et l'Italie au XIIIe siècle," in *Atti del V Congresso Internazionale di Studi Bizantini, Roma 1936* (Rome, 1940), 275–81; P. Miljković-Pepek, "Une icône bilatérale au monastère Saint-Jean Prodrome dans les environs de Serrès," *CahArch* 16 (1966): 181–82; K. Boskovits and G. Jàszal,

that was to predominate from the mid-thirteenth cen-tury, as the Virgin approaches the cross and embraces her dead child, a second female figure takes her place and kisses Christ's hand. The subject appears in impor-tant monuments of the period, such as Mileševa (ca. 1235),[32] the Athos Protaton (ca. 1290),[33] the Peribleptos church in Ohrid (1295),[34] St. George, Staro Nagoričino

(1315–17; fig. 7),[35] St. Niketas, Čučer (ca. 1320),[36] and the Peribleptos, Mistra (ca. 1380).[37]

These scenes are singularly expressive, but they cannot compete with the heart-rending version in the exonarthex of the Vatopedi monastery (1312), in which the painter of this Athonite monument introduces a unique detail: one of the myrrophores, her hands wrapped in her maphorion, is supporting the head of the dead Christ, a pictorial honor never before awarded to any other secondary figure in the scene.[38]

Echoes of this imagery are also found in provin-cial monuments of the period. The mourning female figure appears in scenes of the Lamentation, as for example at the church of the Taxiarches Metropoleos

"Kreuzabnahme," *LChrI* 2:590–94; K. Weitzmann, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 3, *Ivories and Steatites* (Washington, DC, 1972), 66–68; T. Velmans, *La peinture murale byzantine à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1977), 106–8.

32   G. Millet and A. Frolow, *La peinture du moyen âge en Yougoslavie*, 1 (Paris, 1954), pl. 65.2; V. J. Djurić, "La plus anci-enne peinture de Mileševa" (in Serbian with French summary), in *Mileševa dans l'histoire du Peuple Serbe: Colloque scientifique inter-national à l'occasion de 750 ans de son existence* (Belgrade, 1987), 36.

33   Millet, *Athos*, pl. 27.2.

34   Djurić, "La plus ancienne peinture de Mileševa," fig. 12.

35   Millet and Frolow, *Yougoslavie*, 3: pl. 93.1. On the church and its wall paintings, the work of Michael Astrapas and Eutychios, see Todić, *Serbian Medieval Painting*, 320–25 with earlier bibliography.

36   Millet and Frolow, *Yougoslavie*, 3: pl. 44.3, 4.

37   Millet, *Mistra*, 122.3.

38   Tsigaridas, "Τα ψηφιδωτά και οι βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες," 266, fig. 224.

in Kastoria (1359–60),[39] while in a series of Crucifixion scenes, unlike the usual thirteenth-century iconography, which shows the Virgin fainting away,[40] one of the women in her entourage swoons in anguish and is supported by a companion. The motif must have been widely known, as is clear from the fact that at least six examples are found in monuments in southern Greece (fig. 8).[41] In the Byzantine scenes discussed above, there

are no inscriptions or other iconographic conventions to reveal the identity of the mourning myrrophore. Yet almost all modern scholars identify her as Mary Magdalene. In my opinion, the decisive part in this attribution has been played by modern perceptions of the Magdalene—which derive from the western tradition that she was the repentant harlot who followed Christ—combined with the fact that the figure of the sinful Magdalene is depicted mourning in similar fashion in Italian works of the thirteenth century.

In some studies the universal, but, as will be shown, baseless interpretation of the Byzantine

39 S. Pelekanidis and M. Chatzidakis, *Kastoria: Mosaics—Wall Paintings*, Byzantine Art in Greece (Athens, 1985), 100, fig. 13.

40 On the motif of the Virgin's faint, see Millet, "L'art des Balkans," 282–88. A. K. Orlandos, *Η αρχιτεκτονική και αι βυζαντιναί τοιχογραφίαι της Μονής του Θεολόγου Πάτμου* (Athens, 1970), 219–26; L. Hadermann-Misguich, "A propos de la Mavriotissa de Castoria: Arguments iconographiques pour le maintien de la datation des peintures dans la première moitié du XIIIe siècle," *Studia slavico-byzantina et medioevalia europensia* 1 (1988): 143–4.

41 In the Palaiomonastero, Brontama, Lakonia (1201): N. B. Drandakis, "Το Παλιομονάστηρο του Βρονταμά," *Ἀρχ.Δελτ.* 43, no. 1 (1988): 167, pl. 70–71a; in the church of Ai Strategos, in Agios Nikolaos, Monembasia (ca. 1250–60): N. Gkioles, "Ο ναός του Αϊ Στρατηγού στον Άγιο Νικόλαο Μονεμβασίας," *Λακ.Σπ.* 9 (1988): 437, fig. 9; in the Archangel Michael Church in Polemita, Mane (1278): S. Kalopissi-Verti, "Ο ναός του Αρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ στον Πολεμίτα της

Μέσα Μάνης (1278)," in *Ἀντίφωνον: Ἀφιέρωμα στον καθηγητή Ν. Β. Δρανδάκη* (Thessalonike, 1994), 463; in St. Sotera, Kalopyrgos Drys, Mane (last quarter of the 13th c.): N. B. Drandakis, "Παρατηρήσεις στις τοιχογραφίες του 13ου αιώνα που σώζονται στη Μάνη," in *The 17th International Byzantine Congress, Major Papers* (New Rochelle, NY, 1986), 686 fig. 1. It is also found in St. Andrew, Perlengianika on Kythera (third quarter of the 13th c.): M. Chatzidakis and I. Bitha, *Corpus of the Byzantine Wall-Paintings of Greece*, vol. 1, *The Island of Kythera* (Athens, 2003), no. 3a, 78–9 fig. 8, and in the Omorphe Ekklesia on Aegina (1289): G. Soteriou, "Η Ομορφή Εκκλησιά Αιγίνης," *Ἐπ.Ἐτ.Βυζ.Σπ.* 2 (1925): 269–70.

FIG. 8   Crucifixion, Omorphe Ekklesia, Aigina (1289). Photo: author

mourning myrrophore as the sinful woman of the Gospels has led to the plausible but generalizing notion that the dramatic rendering of the female figure in the Byzantine examples constitutes influence from contemporary Italian art.[42] Other studies, however, have attributed the highly emotive depictions of women in the Byzantine examples to the aesthetic trends of the period, that is, to the more general interest in the depiction of emotions and dramatic tension discernible in late Byzantine art.[43] This latter opinion was supported by the fact that the mourning figure with her arms thrown upward first appears in the iconography of the Passion in the second half of the eleventh century[44] and has been identified in some examples from the end of the twelfth century, when the interest in a more dramatic rendering of the Christological scenes was already evident.[45] Nevertheless, that the same pose is also adopted for other figures in these scenes, such as the lamenting angels, suggests that in the few eleventh- and twelfth-century examples in which it is found, it is merely an iconographic convention for representing grief and is not intended to make the myrrophore stand out, as is the case in the late Byzantine examples.[46]

I shall argue that the special emphasis given to one of the myrrophores in scenes of the Passion in late Byzantine art is not an arbitrary choice, nor does it reveal the flimsy boundaries between Western and Byzantine iconography or the wider artistic climate of the period. On the contrary, I shall attempt to demonstrate that, as in the West the presence of the penitent sinner Mary Magdalene mourning beneath the cross

42   See, for example, Orlandos, *Η αρχιτεκτονική*, 237.

43   T. Velmans, "Les valeurs affectives dans la peinture murale byzantine au XIIIe siècle et la manière de les représenter," in *L'art byzantin du XIIIe siècle: Symposium de Sopoćani 1965* (Belgrade, 1967), 47–57; eadem, *La peinture murale*, 102–13.

44   See, for example the depiction in the so-called Parma Gospels (Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, cod. 5): Spatharakis, "The Influence of the Lithos" (n. 20 above), 439, fig. 3.

45   The figure with her arms raised appears in the late 12th c. in the Georgian Gelati Gospels and in the church of St. George at Kurbinovo (1191): Velmans, *La peinture murale*, 105, figs. 100, 105.

46   Moreover, as Henry Maguire has noted, the intense and violent gestures that predominate in the rendering of the subject after the mid-13th c. are on the whole rare in middle Byzantine art; see "The Depiction of Sorrow" (n. 21 above), 132.

is connected with a particular historical reality—the spread, among the mendicant orders, of a cult focusing on this aspect of her persona—something similar was occurring in Byzantium. In other words, the appearance of a mourning myrrophore reflects a corresponding historical moment in the contemporary Byzantine East.

Who is the Mourning Myrrophore in the Byzantine Examples?

In order to reveal the identity of the mourning myrrophore, we must first turn to the texts that refer to the presence of women at the Passion. Research into the relevant sources has shown that, both in apocryphal literature and in doctrinal treatises, the myrrophores are confined to very brief mentions, their role limited mostly to supporting and comforting the Virgin. The apocryphal *Gospel of Nikodemos*, for example, simply notes that "the women were crying."[47] It is a commonplace both in patristic texts and in works by later Byzantine theologians, especially in homilies on the Passion or commentaries on the Gospels, to find a sort of encomium to the women as a group, because, unlike the disciples, they were present in Christ's time of need. However, even in these instances any reference to their emotional state is limited to just a few words.[48]

By contrast, a late text, roughly contemporary with the scenes mentioned above, gives a highly detailed account of the lamentation of one particular woman in the Virgin's entourage: Mary Magdalene. This is a homily dedicated to the saint and attributed to Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos.[49]

In constructing the encomium to the Magdalene the author describes her presence at the Crucifixion in a particularly moving scene. Thus he writes that, armed with courage, she approached the cross with Christ's mother and his disciple "and touched those immaculate feet, kissed the wounds with her mouth, mingled her tears with the blood, and added words to those tears."[50] The homily goes on to give the lengthy lament she addresses to the crucified Christ. Even more dramatic is the scene Xanthopoulos weaves in order to present her participation in the Entombment to the listener: "With her soul enraptured . . . she kissed the nails, and brought the wounds to her eyes, touched his truly beautiful feet . . . and [those] hands, which created the whole world . . . and flung her arms around the whole body and clung to the feet . . . and she cried out loud, with her hair disheveled and tearing at her cheeks with her fingernails . . ."[51] It ends by asking: "Who could adequately describe how terrible were the grief and mourning of this blessed woman?"[52]

The similarity between this text and the scenes referred to above is surprising. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the text was their source of inspiration, first because it is not easy to show the chronological relationship between them, and then again because it is equally likely that, in his attempt to describe in words the figure of the Magdalene, Xanthopoulos could have been inspired by the dramatic scenes in Palaiologan painting. In any event it is not our aim to determine whether this particular text was a source of inspiration for the painted imagery or vice versa, but rather to find some logical explanation for the special interest, observable in the late thirteenth century, both in the

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47 *Acta Pilati*, 2.10: "ἀκούσασα ἡ Θεοτόκος καὶ ἰδοῦσα αὐτὸν ὀλιγοψύχησε καὶ ἔπεσεν ἐξ ὀπίσω εἰς τὴν γῆν καὶ ἔκειτο ἱκανὴν ὥραν· καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες ὅσαι ἠκολούθουν αὐτῇ ἱστάμεναι γύρωθεν αὐτῆς ἔκλαιον," C. Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1876), 282.

48 See, for example, John Chrysostom (4th c.), *In Matthaeum Homilia 88*, PG 58:777–78; idem, *In Joannem Homilia 85*, PG 59:462; George of Nikomedeia (9th c.), *Oratio 8: In SS Mariam assistentem Cruci*, PG 100:1461c; Theophylaktos, archbishop of Ohrid (12th c.), *Commentarius in Joannis Evangelium*, PG 124:280b; Euthymios Zigabenos (12th c.), *Commentarius in Matthaeum*, PG 129:737b, 740. See also Manuel Philes' epigram no. 260 (13th c.), *Manuelis Philae Carmina*, ed. E. Miller (Paris, 1855), 1:131.

49 Λόγος εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν καὶ ἰσαπόστολον Μυροφόρον Μαρία τὴν Μαγδαληνὴν (= *Sermo in Sanctam et Apostolis aequalem unguentiferam Mariam Magdalenam, BHG* 1162), PG 147:539–576. For more

details on Xanthopoulos, whose writings date to between 1280 and 1328, see below, 284–85, 287–89.

50 "καὶ ποδῶν ἅψασθαι τῶν ἀχράντων ἐκείνων, στόματί τε καταφιλεῖν τὰς πληγὰς, καὶ τοῖς αἵμασι μιγνύειν τὰ δάκρυα, καὶ τοῖς δάκρυσι τοιαῦτα προστιθέναι τὰ ῥήματα," PG 147:556C

51 "τὴν ψυχὴν μετέωρος οὖσα . . . τοὺς ἥλους τε κατεφίλει, καὶ τὰ λακίσματα προσετίθει τοῖς ὄμμασι, ποδῶν τε ἐκείνων ἥπτετο τῶν ὄντως ὡραίων, . . . καὶ χειρῶν, ὧν ἔργον κόσμος ἅπας, . . . περιεχεῖτό τε ὅλῳ τῷ σώματι, καὶ προσεφύετο τοῖς ποσί . . . ἐξῆρχε γόων, λυσαμένη τὰς τρίχας, καὶ τὰς παρειὰς τοῖς ὄνυξι καταξαίνουσα," PG 147:557D–560A.

52 "τίς ἂν ἱκανῶς διηγήσαιτο, ὁπόσον τῇ μακαρίᾳ ταύτῃ τὸ πένθος καὶ τὸ τῆς λύπης δεινόν;" PG 147:560B.

unidentified myrrophore of the sacred scenes and in the Mary Magdalene of the text.[53]

Xanthopoulos's composition can provide the starting point for this inquiry, as it is more than just an encomium. I consider it a text that reflects an ecclesiastical policy, and in what follows I shall attempt to explain why. But first, the cult of the Magdalene in Byzantium must be briefly described.

The Cult of Mary Magdalene in Byzantium

The first evidence of the cult of Mary Magdalene dates to the tenth century and is found in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*. In the brief text for 22 July, the date of her commemoration, the little information we get on her life comes almost exclusively from the Gospels.[54] It commemorates the casting out of her seven demons by Christ,[55] her presence among the women who followed him from Galilee and attended the Crucifixion and the Entombment,[56] and finally the fact that she was the first to see him risen.[57] From the *Synaxarion* we also learn that, after Christ's Ascension, she went to Ephesos with St. John the Evangelist, where she died and was buried in the entrance to the cave of the Seven Sleepers.[58] The text ends with the information that in the time of the emperor Leo VI her relics were translated to Constantinople and placed with the relics of St. Lazaros in that saint's eponymous monastery, which the emperor had founded and dedicated to Christ's friend.

This brief biographical note in the *Synaxarion* is repeated almost word for word in the so-called *Menologion of Basil II*,[59] while in the mid-eleventh century another version, equally brief but more flowery in its language, is included in a collection of hagiographical texts known as the *Imperial Menologion*.[60] Finally, though there are longer versions of her life,[61] the fact that she was not included in the compilation of Symeon Metaphrastes suggests that her *vita* could not have been particularly widely known.[62]

The other information we have from Byzantine sources focuses on the translation of her relics and is found exclusively in historiographical works and in the tradition of the *patria* (see Appendix). From these we learn, with more specificity than is found in the *Synaxarion* or the menologia, that in the year 900 the emperor Leo VI founded the monastery of St. Lazaros, in which were kept the relics of the eponymous saint and those of the Magdalene, brought from Cyprus and Ephesos respectively.[63] Indeed the commemoration of

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53 As Anne Derbes has also noted, few medieval art historians would nowadays claim that any iconographic subject has come directly out of a particular text: *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy: Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levant* (Cambridge, 1996), 21. For a methodological suggestion for the use of texts in understanding and interpreting Byzantine art, see also H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park, PA and London, 1987), 1–2.

54 H. Delehaye, ed., *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (Brussels, 1902), 843.

55 Mark 16:9, Luke 8:2.

56 Matt. 27:55–61, Mark 15:40–41, John 19:25.

57 Matt. 28:1–10, Mark 16:1–11, Luke 24:1–10, John 20:1–18.

58 This tradition is first encountered in the 6th c. in Gregory of Tours (ca. 538–94) and a little later in the early 7th c. in a homily of Modestos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who specifically indicated the cave of the Seven Sleepers as her burial place; see Saxer, "Les saintes Marie Madeleine et Marie de Béthanie" (n. 5 above), 21–26. For later references to the tomb of the Magdalene in Ephesos, especially by pilgrims, see Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 106–8.

59 *Menologium Graecorum*, PG 117:553.

60 V. V. Latyšev, *Menologii anonymi byzantini saeculi X quae supersunt* (St. Petersburg, 1911; repr. Leipzig, 1970), 202–4 (*BHG* 1161z). On this collection, thought to be a work of the 11th c., which was assembled for an emperor, see F. Halkin, *Le ménologe impérial de Baltimore: Textes grecs publiés et traduits* (Brussels, 1985), 7–12.

61 These are as yet unpublished, see *BHG* 2:82, nos. 1161x, 1161y.

62 Recently C. Høgel argued that the Metaphrastian Menologion was unfinished and that therefore the months from February to August contain fewer saints' lives than the first six months of the year; C. Høgel, *Symeon Metaphrastes: Rewriting and Canonization* (Copenhagen, 2002), esp. 110–26. According to this interpretation, the absence of the Magdalene, whose feast falls on 22 July, cannot be taken as having any bearing on her significance as a saint. On the other hand, since the Metaphrastian Menologion subsequently became extremely well known, the Magdalene's omission could have influenced her popularity. For the widespread distribution of the Metaphrastian Menologion, see N. Patterson-Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion* (Chicago and London, 1990), 1–6; H. Deliyanni-Doris, "Menologion," *RbK* 8:127–29; Høgel, *Symeon Metaphrastes*, 150–58.

63 See details of these sources in the Appendix. On this monastery, see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin*, pt. 1, *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarchat œcuménique*, vol. 3, *Les églises et les monastères*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1969), 298–300. The Macedonian period is considered the heyday of disinterment and translation of relics to the capital, which became a treasury containing the most important relics of the Middle Ages: see B. Flusin, "Les reliques de la Sainte-Chapelle et leur passé impérial à Constantinople," in *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle, Paris*, ed. J. Durand and M.-P. Lafitte (Paris, 2001), 26–27; C. Mango, introduction to *Byzance et les reliques du*

the event was celebrated annually in that monastery on 4 May.[64]

From this it is evident that, as an independent holy figure, the Magdalene could not have been particularly popular in Byzantium. There is a good deal of evidence to support this conclusion. First is the fact that there are no churches dedicated to her in Constantinople or in other cities of the empire in the Byzantine period.[65] The almost complete absence of representations of her from painted church programs also indicates her restricted role in public worship.[66] It seems that she was not a particularly popular saint even in the context of private devotion, as there are no surviving depictions of her in works intended for personal veneration. In more general terms, as regards iconic representations, with the exception of two depictions in illustrated menologia,[67] research to date has not discovered any other portraits of the saint. Similarly, there are very few depictions of her in narrative scenes, and these are found only in illuminated manuscripts. For the most part they involve the scenes of the visit to the empty tomb and the encounter with the risen Christ, which we find in the eleventh-century frieze Gospels and in the so-called Nikomedeia Gospel of the late twelfth century.[68] However, both in this smattering of examples and in the two above-mentioned menologia,

the depiction of a portrait of Magdalene or of a scene in which she plays a leading role is contingent on the content and nature of the manuscripts and cannot be considered evidence of a special significance of the saint or proof of the existence of some sort of "Magdalene imagery" in the Middle Byzantine period.[69]

Similarly, her relics could not have been among the more popular treasures of the capital. Of the twelve texts written by foreigners, mostly Westerners, who visited the city up to 1204,[70] they are mentioned only in the so-called anonymous Mercati (early twelfth century).[71] And while their absence from these texts cannot be considered a particularly telling indication of their significance, their omission from the comprehensive list of 295 relics and popular objects of veneration in Constantinople made by Anthony of Novgorod (ca. 1200) suggests that, before the capture of the city by the

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Christ, ed. J. Durand and B. Flusin, Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Monographies 17 (Paris, 2004), 12.

64 Delehaye, *Synaxarium*, 658.

65 Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, see index, 606. Idem, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantines* (Paris, 1975), see index, 473–74.

66 An exception is the portrait of Mary Magdalene found in a late, provincial church in southern Greece, St. John the Baptist in Chrysapha, Lakonia. Indeed, Professor Drandakis, who published the wall painting, emphasized the rarity of such depictions of the saint; see *Δαx.Σπ.* 9 (1988): 308 n. 4, fig. 16.

67 They are in codex Tbilisi A648 (ca. 1030), on which see P. Mijović, *Ménologe: Recherches iconographiques* (Belgrade, 1973), 192–93, and in the manuscript known as the Menologion of the Despot Demetrios I Palaiologos (1322–40), I. Hutter, *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturenhandschriften*, vol. 2, *Oxford Bodleian Library II* (Stuttgart, 1978), fig. 91. Later she was also depicted in monumental imagery of menologia in Balkan wall paintings, see Mijović, *Ménologe*, 375, 389.

68 On the scenes in the frieze Gospels, see T. Velmans, *Le Tétraévangile de la Laurentienne* (Paris, 1971), figs. 179, 299 (Laur. VI. 23) and H. Omont, *Évangiles avec peintures byzantines du XIe siècle* (Paris, 1908), pl. 183 (Par. Gr. 74). On the image in the so-called Nikomedeia Gospels (Kiev Library MS 25), see A. Weyl

Carr, *Byzantine Illumination 1150–1250: The Study of a Provincial Tradition* (Chicago and London, 1987), 238, fiche 12B11.

69 The two frieze gospels represent a special type of manuscript with extensive illustrations. They include a large number of scenes (over 300), which are depicted in bands within the body of the text and illustrate the Gospel extracts in extraordinary detail: see Velmans, *Le Tétraévangile*, 14–16. The Kiev Gospel is another special case as regards its illustrations and, as Weyl Carr has noted, it differs from the other manuscripts in this group, giving special emphasis to a salvation message in the choice of its scenes: see Weyl Carr, *Byzantine Illumination*, 59–60.

70 See an assemblage of the relevant texts from before 1204 in G. P. Majeska, "The Relics of Constantinople after 1204," in *Byzance et les Reliques du Christ*, 183 n.1. On Westerners who visited Constantinople in this period, see K. N. Ciggaar, *Western Travellers to Constantinople: The West and Byzantium, 962–1204; Cultural and Political Relations* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1996), 48–50.

71 "Iuxta autem monasterium sanctae Mariae Dei genitricis est monasterium sancti Lazari, et ibi iacet sanctus Lazarus quem suscitavit Dominus de monumento quatriduanum. Et sancta Maria Magdalena et reliquiae sancta Marthe, et Marie sororis Lazari. Sanctum Lazarum quidem aportavit de Cipro in Constantinopolitanam urbem Leo imperator, et construxit monasterium sancti Lazari. Corpus autem sanctae Marie Magdelene adduxit idem imperator de Epheso. Ibi ergo erat sepulta sancta Maria iuxta septem dormientes": K. N. Ciggaar, "Description de Constantinople traduite par un pèlerin anglais du XIIᵉ siècle," *REB* 34 (1976): 249. However, this text was not actually written by a foreign visitor, but rather was a translation of a corresponding Greek version from the second half of the 11th c., which was most probably used as a guidebook. This may also explain why the reference to the relics kept in the church is more complete and more in line with Orthodox tradition than in the texts written by foreign visitors. That is, it notes that the monastery had the relics of Lazaros, of his two sisters Mary and Martha, and of Mary Magdalene.

Crusaders in 1204, the existence of the Magdalene's relics in the monastery of St. Lazaros was unlikely to have been particularly widely known.[72]

Another issue emerging from the sources is that there was sometimes confusion about her identity, probably in connection with the "composite" Western saint. For example, in some of the historical texts that commemorate the translation of her relics, she is referred to as a sister of Lazaros,[73] while the celebrated *troparion* by Kassia "To the Harlot" (first half of 9th century) is an instance of her being identified with the anonymous woman sinner.[74] This last text, though nowadays one of the best known Byzantine poems, does not of course constitute evidence of the Magdalene's being widely perceived as a penitent sinner in Byzantium too.[75] However, there is one other source that indirectly touches upon the subject and at the same time reveals the Orthodox Church's official view on it. It is from the *Bibliotheca* by Photios, in a commentary on a homily by the seventh-century patriarch of Jerusalem, Modestos,

on the myrrophores. It mentions the Magdalene as a member of the Virgin's entourage until the Dormition and tells how thereafter she stood out for her apostolic mission alongside John in Ephesos. Despite the particularly concise nature of the commentary, Photios is at pains to stress several times "her utmost virginity and crystalline purity," to the point that his insistence suggests that he was responding to those who doubted it.[76]

In any event, the question of the identity of the Magdalene seems never to have been a subject of debate among Byzantine theologians, as it was, for example, for the Latin bishop of Latakia in Syria, Gerard of Nazareth, who wrote three homilies on the saint in the mid-twelfth century, one with the eloquent title *De una Magdalena contra Graecos*, in order to defend the Western version of Mary Magdalene against the alternative view of the local Eastern Christians. The writings of this Western cleric reveal an ongoing debate as to the identity of the Magdalene in the multicultural environment of the Crusader states. However, the discussion does not arise for purely dogmatic reasons, as one might expect; rather, as Andrew Jotischky has shown, there were devotional practices at its root.[77] In particular it seems that, apart from anything else, the Latin bishop was aiming to present the Latin monastery of Bethany as one of the saint's authentic cult centers and by extension as a place of pilgrimage. The monastery was restored in the twelfth century by Queen Melisende, so that her sister Ivetta could launch her career as an abbess there.[78] It was dedicated to the Magdalene in her capacity as sister of Lazaros, and it seems that, as regards attracting pilgrims, it had a serious rival in the

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72   On this text see P. Riant, *Exuviae Sacrae Constantinopolitanae* (Geneva, 1878), 2:218–30; G. P. Majeska, "Russian Pilgrims in Constantinople," *DOP* 56 (2002): 93–101; idem, "Russian Pilgrims and the Relics of Constantinople," in *Eastern Christian Relics*, ed. A. Lidov (Moscow, 2003), 387–89.

73   In this case, it seems the confusion of these two was due more likely to the shared location of the cults of the Magdalene and Lazaros than to the corresponding Western tradition. See the comment on this in the Appendix.

74   The original title of the troparion is "Κύριε, ἡ ἐν πολλαῖς ἁμαρτίαις περιπεσοῦσα γυνή." In this poem the anonymous sinner is presented as a myrrophore who, before the Entombment, addresses her lament and her prayer for salvation to the dead Christ. The poem makes no reference to the Magdalene, yet the identification of the anonymous woman as a myrrophore present at the Entombment of Christ would indicate her; see A. R. Dyck, "On Cassia, Κύριε, ἡ ἐν πολλαῖς," *Byzantion* 56 (1986): 63–76, with English translation of the poem.

75   On the later reception of the poem, which has been included in several anthologies and even paraphrased by modern writers, see summary in Dyck, "On Cassia," n. 1. According to one view, in comparing the anonymous sinner with the Magdalene, Kassia was doing something new: see ibid., n. 9. On the other hand, according to a recent view, the identification of the anonymous sinful myrrophore in this poem with the Magdalene may be the over-interpretation of modern scholars, based on their perceptions of the sinful nature of the Magdalene, and not an innovation on Kassia's part, because, as mentioned above, the Magdalene is not mentioned by name at any point in the poem: see N. Tsironis, "The Body and the Senses in the Work of Cassia the Hymnographer: Literary Trends in the Iconoclastic Period," *Symmeikta* 16 (2003–4): 142–43.

76   "διὰ τὴν ἄκραν αὐτῆς παρθενίαν καὶ καθαρότητα ὡς ὕαλον," *Photius, Bibliothèque*, ed. R. Henry (Paris, 1977), 8:118–19.

77   A. Jotischky, "Gerard of Nazareth, Mary Magdalene and Latin Relations with the Greek Orthodox in the Crusader East in the Twelfth Century," *Levant* 29 (1997): 217–26. See also B. Z. Kedar, "Gerard of Nazareth: A Neglected Twelfth-Century Writer in the Latin East," *DOP* 37 (1983): 55–77, esp. 63–65.

78   On this monastery see J. Folda, *The Art of the Crusades in the Holy Land, 1098–1187* (Cambridge, 1995), 130–31; D. Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus* (Cambridge, 1993), 1:122–24. The queen's special relationship with the Magdalene is suggested also by the depiction of the saint in the celebrated Melisende Psalter; see H. Buchthal, *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford, 1957), 132, 134.

church of the Magdalene in Jerusalem, which belonged to a Jacobite monastic community.[79]

The Mary Magdalene of Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos

From the above analysis it is clear that the Magdalene did not play a particularly important role in the religious life of Constantinople in the middle Byzantine period, either as a saintly figure or on account of her relics. On the contrary, it seems she became popular in the Holy Land only after the creation of the Crusader states, a development related to her status as an apostolic saint, and indeed to the special devotion she already received in the West.[80] Until the late twelfth century, however, she seems to have remained a rather obscure saint in Byzantium.

Almost a century after the Crusader states were established in the Holy Land, Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos pulled her out of this obscurity by dedicating the above-mentioned homily to her. The author, a cleric in the patriarchate, who belonged to the circle of Patriarch Gregorios II the Cypriot, was an outstanding member of the intellectual elite of Constantinople.[81] Thanks to his professional status he had access to the Patriarchal Library, where it seems he carried out research for his writings.[82] Active during the reign of Andronikos II (1282–1328), he has left us theological,

rhetorical, and hagiographical texts, among them the encomium to the Magdalene.[83]

In its twenty-seven chapters, Xanthopoulos uses a wealth of factual details to present the life and personality of the saint. He informs us, more precisely than the Gospels or the hagiographical texts, that she was born "around the middle of the reign of the Caesar Octavian" and refers in detail to her family circumstances and how she spent her time as a girl.[84] He stresses that, contrary to what one might expect of a girl of that time, she took no trouble to learn how to spin and weave, but "as soon as she could walk ... she started to study with a teacher"; in the end she was entirely occupied in "fasting and prayer, mortification of the flesh, gravitating toward and becoming familiar with the divine, study of the law, reading of the Scriptures. ..."[85]

He goes on to describe in detail how the devil attacked her and took her virginity, giving her seven demons.[86] He also uses Gospel texts to fit her healing by Christ into the chronological framework of his preaching in Galilee in a logical manner,[87] and with similar concern for plausibility he presents her as present at every event in Christ's life between the raising of Lazaros and the Ascension.[88] For example, she manages to get near the courtyard of the high priest in an attempt to discover Christ's fate, witnesses his mocking and his torments,[89] and shows such courage and faith

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79 On this Jacobite monastery, see A. J. Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades* (London and New York, 2001), 130.

80 It is interesting to note that her main shrine in the West and a great pilgrimage center, the monastery of Vézelay, was the "launch pad" for the Second Crusade; see "Vézelay," *LMA* 8:1610; Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 36; Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 122. See also below.

81 His distinguished learning and his relations with intellectual circles of the time are evident both from his correspondence and from the poems dedicated to him by Manuel Philes and Theodore Metochites. See M. Cunningham, J. Featherstone, and S. Georgiopoulou, "Theodore Metochites's Poem to Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos," *HUkSt* 7 (1983): 100–103; F. Winkelmann, "Zur Bedeutung der Kirchengeschichte des Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos," *JÖB* 44 (1994): 440–43.

82 H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im Byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), 705–7; *PLP* 8, no. 20826, 196; Winkelmann, "Zur Bedeutung der Kirchengeschichte," 441. See also A.-M. Talbot, "Two Accounts of Miracles at the Pege Shrine in Constantinople," *TM* 14 (2002): 611–12, in which some of the various types of textual sources used by Xanthopoulos in writing his account of the miracles at the Church of Zoodochos Pege in Constantinople are identified.

83 Beck, *Kirche*, 705–7; Winkelmann, "Zur Bedeutung," 441.

84 "περὶ τὰ μέσα που τῆς μοναρχίας τοῦ Καίσαρος Ὀκταβίου. ..." PG 147:545B.

85 "ἄρτι ποσὶν οἰκείοις ἐπιβαίνειν τῆς γῆς ἤρξατο ... ἐς γραμματιστοῦ φοιτᾶν ἐγκελεύεται"; "νηστεία καὶ προσευχὴ, τῆξις σαρκὸς, καὶ ἡ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον νεῦσίς τε καὶ οἰκείωσις, νόμου μελέτη, Γραφῶν ἀνάγνωσις. ..." PG 147:545C–D.

86 The Gospel passages make no reference to this event but simply mention "Mary Magdalene, from whom he [Christ] had cast seven demons" (Mark 16:9) and "Mary called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out" (Luke 8:2, RSV). Xanthopoulos, by contrast, devotes a large part of the encomium to this episode, explaining that "the father of envy ... plundered her and made her all his own and took away from her everything divine and exalted" ("[ὁ τοῦ φθόνου πατὴρ] ταύτην τε πορθήσας, καὶ ὅλην ἑαυτοῦ ποιησάμενος, ἀφαιρεῖται μὲν αὐτῆς εἴ τι θεῖον καὶ ὑψηλόν"), PG 147:548C–49A.

87 PG 147:549–52.

88 PG 147:552–68.

89 "καὶ ἡ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως αὐλὴ τὸν μέγαν εἶχεν ἀρχιερέα δέσμιον. Πόσον δ' ἄρ' εἰκάζεις τὴν μακαρίαν ταύτην τῷ τότε παθεῖν, ἑπομένην, παρεπομένην, πλαττομένην τὴν μὴ εἰδυῖαν, ἐν χρῷ θυρῶν γινομένην,

as even to quarrel with the soldier who thrusts his spear into Christ's side on the cross.[90]

Xanthopoulos also refers to her apostolic mission, her travels, and her life with the Virgin in Palestine and later with St. John in Ephesos.[91] Finally he mentions that on her journey from the Holy Land to Ephesos she took with her the stone slab on which Christ's body was laid during the Entombment.[92] This is an important detail, because its sources are to be found in the tradition that accompanied the holy relic of the *lithos* to Constantinople when Manuel I Komnenos had it transferred from Ephesos in 1170 in order to dedicate it to the Pantokrator monastery.[93]

So it appears that Xanthopoulos not only used the Gospel texts and hagiographical traditions but also reproduced the myths of the imperial capital in order to create a detailed and plausible life of the Magdalene. The way in which he attempts to fill the lacunas left by

the meager information in the Gospels and the earlier, laconic *vitae* suggests that he spent quite a lot of time researching and looking for inspiration in earlier sources.[94] In other words, it seems that he was trying to give the Magdalene some gravitas and to advance her status in the ranks of sainthood. But why should he want to do such a thing?

The answer is found in the last chapter of the homily, which recounts the translation of her relics. It describes in great detail how the emperor Leo and his brother Alexander carried the blessed body of Mary on their shoulders from Ephesos and placed it in the church of St. Lazaros, to the left of the sanctuary, having first enclosed it in a silver reliquary. It also describes the church in its usual vivid fashion and finishes by repeating in the manner of a guidebook exactly where the saint's relics were kept: "on the left side in the walls fronting the sanctuary."[95]

From the level of detail and the persuasive tone he uses in describing the translation and the location of the relics, it is evident that Xanthopoulos was trying to convince his audience that the Magdalene's relics were in fact in the church of St. Lazaros. But why should he show such an interest in declaring the ownership of the relics? Could it be perhaps because the title to them was being disputed at the time by some other claimant? The answer to this last question is in the affirmative—and there was more than one pretender.

Stories Associated with the Magdalene's Relics in the West

It is well known that the cult of the Magdalene in the West, unlike in Byzantium, was particularly widespread. Until around the end of the thirteenth century it centered on the monastery of Vézelay in Burgundy.[96]

τὰς εἰσόδους, τὰς ἐξόδους κατανοοῦσαν, στόμασί τε τοῖς ἁπάντων προσέχουσαν, τίνες μεν οἱ τῇ κατ' αὐτοῦ ἀποφάσει συνευδοκοῦντες, τίσι δὲ μέμψεως τὸ πρᾶγμα ἐκρίνετο, καὶ ὅσα ἂν μάθον τῇ μητρὶ διαγγέλλουσαν, οὐχ ἧττον ἢ ἐκείνη τὰ σπλάγχνα σπαρασσομένην, τὴν ψυχήν τε μετέωρον ἔχουσαν, τὰ τοῦ πράγματος ὅποι ποτ' ἂν λήξειαν, ἐφιεμένην μαθεῖν·" PG 147:556A–B.

90 "ἀλλ' εἷς τῶν στρατιωτῶν λόγχῃ τὴν πλευρὰν αὐτοῦ ἔνυξε, καὶ εὐθέως ἐξῆλθεν αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ. Τί χρὴ νομίζειν τὴν διάπυρον τότε ταύτην παθεῖν; μικροῦ ἂν καὶ τὸν στρατιώτην διέσπασεν, εἰ μὴ κατὰ γυναῖκα συστελλομένη ἀνεδύετο, καὶ τὰ γυναικῶν φρονεῖν ἠναγκάζετο· κἂν ἀνδρεῖον ἔχουσα φρόνημα, Ἔπεχε, λέγει, τὴν χεῖρα, τολμηρὲ στρατιῶτα, μὴ σοι ῥομφαία ἐπέλθοι θεήλατος." PG 147:557B.

91 PG 147:569A.

92 "ἐξαίσιόν τινα φόρτον τούτῳ, μετακομίζουσα, λίθον τὸν ἐρυθρὸν, ἐν ᾧ λόγος τὸν ζωοδότην Χριστὸν μετὰ τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ θείου ξύλου κατάβασιν ἀνακλιθῆναι νεκροπρεπῶς ... ὃς ἐσύστερον λίθος εἰς τὴν Κωνσταντίνου ἐκεῖθεν διαβιβάζεται, εὐσεβῶν βασιλέων ὑποσχόντων τούτῳ τοὺς ὤμους," PG 147:569D.

93 John Kinnamos, *Epitome*, ed. A. Meineke, CSHB (Bonn, 1836), 277: "τοῦτον δὴ τὸν λίθον ἡ ἐκ Μαγδαλᾶ φασὶν ἀναλαβοῦσα Μαρία ἔπλει Ῥώμης εὐθὺ ἐφ' ᾧ καίσαρι ἐς ὄψιν ἐλθοῦσα Τιβερίῳ Πιλάτου καὶ Ἰουδαίων τῶν ἀδίκων Ἰησοῦ κατερεῖ φονευτῶν. ἀλλὰ τύχῃ τινὶ ἐς τὸν Ἐφεσίων λιμένα κατάρασα αὐτὸν μὲν ἐνταῦθα ἔλιπεν." On the translation of the slab to Constantinople by Manuel I Komnenos, see Spatharakis, "Influence of the Lithos" (n. 20 above), 437–38. Manuel was buried beside the *lithos*, and it is interesting to note that in the funerary poem inscribed on his tomb, his consort Mary of Antioch is presented as lamenting in grief-stricken fashion, "like that other Maria who secretly brought unguents" ("ὡς μυροφόρος μύστις ἄλλη Μαρία"): see C. Mango, "Notes on Byzantine Monuments," *DOP* 23 (1979): 372–75. Despite the fact that Mary the Myrrophore is not referred to as the Magdalene in Manuel's funerary inscription, the comparison is inevitable.

94 Looking for the models and sources used by Xanthopoulos in writing his homily could be extremely interesting and rewarding. For example, the similarity between Mary Magdalene's lament at the Crucifixion and the aforementioned *troparion* by Kassia, in both their subject and vocabulary, should be noted.

95 "οὗ ἐς ἀριστερὰ κατὰ τοὺς τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐμπροσθίους τοίχους," PG 147:573D. The placing of relics in walls or supports was a well-known practice in pilgrimage centers in Byzantium; see N. Teteriatnikov, "Relics in the Walls, Pillars, and Columns of Byzantine Churches," in *Eastern Christian Relics*, ed. A. Lidov (Moscow, 2003), 77–92.

96 On Vézelay and its importance as a pilgrimage center, see, in addition to the detailed studies by V. Saxer, a brief summary in

The development of the Magdalene's cult at Vézelay produced first the saint's body and then, much later, a series of elaborate texts recounting her arrival at the monastery. Just before the middle of the eleventh century, thanks to the efforts of one of its abbots, the monastery was dedicated to the Magdalene and a papal bull certified that her relics were to be found there. Later, in the twelfth century, when the monastery had expanded into an important religious and political center, a written tradition began to take shape as to how the relics had arrived there from St. Maximin in Provence, where, according to the *vita apostolica*, the saint had been buried.[97] When, in the early thirteenth century, the monks were facing conflict with local lay and church officials and a decline in pilgrimage, they were obliged to discover the relics once again, which, it should be noted, had never been visible. This rediscovery was accompanied by what Victor Saxer has called *le dossier vézelien*, a collection of hagiographical, liturgical, and historical texts that certify the presence of the relics in the monastery.[98] However, this project was only of short-term benefit, because in 1280 the monastery of St. Maximin, supported by Charles II of Anjou, maintained that it had discovered and now possessed the genuine relics of the Magdalene.[99]

Charles II of Anjou attempted to encourage devotion to the Magdalene in Provence, and he promoted her cult in his south Italian kingdom, too. His interest in the Magdalene, apart from personal piety, had a purely political motive. His father, Charles I, had put all his might into creating the Angevin kingdom; it fell to Charles II to consecrate his efforts by selecting a saintly protector for their dynasty. The Magdalene was ideally suited to this role: she had been one of Christ's followers and, according to hagiographic tradition, had preached Christianity and been buried in Provence, a region that was a family fief on his mother's side.[100]

His attempts to revive the cult began with the discovery of the saint's relics in the monastery of St. Maximin in 1279, before he had been crowned king of Sicily. He took part in this operation himself, excavating the tomb of the saint and enshrining the relics in a gold reliquary donated to the monastery in a magnificent ceremony the following year. His interest in the Magdalene did not stop there. He himself, as well as high officials and nobles of his kingdom, founded and decorated a series of churches dedicated to the saint. The Dominicans, to whom, by agreement with Charles II, the Pope had entrusted the monastery of Saint Maximin, played an important role in this policy of devotion.[101]

The conflict between the monasteries of Vézelay and St. Maximin over their claims to the genuine relics lasted several years and seems to have reached such a pitch that finally the Pope was obliged to intervene. In 1295 the dispute was brought to an end by a papal bull declaring that the genuine relics were in the possession of the Provençal monastery.[102]

On the one hand, the connection with Charles II of Anjou and the Dominicans and, on the other, the embroilment of the Pope make this late thirteenth-century case concerning the genuine relics of the Magdalene a story of international dimensions by the standards of the day. Charles's status on the political scene of Frankish southern Greece and the active presence in the East of representatives of the two mendicant orders, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, make it very likely that this conflict was not unknown in Byzantium.[103] Moreover it is well known that the mendicant orders, whose basic aim was to proselytize non-Catholics, including Orthodox Christians, became very active in the Levant from as early as the beginning of the thirteenth century. Some of their most celebrated members knew Greek and acted as intermediaries in

Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 122–24. See also above, n. 80.

97 On the hagiographical tradition, see n. 7 above. See also P. J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, rev. ed. (Princeton, 1990), 74–78; Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 117–122.

98 V. Saxer, *Le Dossier Vézelien de Marie Madeleine: Invention et translation des reliques en 1265–67*, SubsHag 57 (Brussels, 1975).

99 Saxer, *Le Dossier Vézelien*, 163–165. Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 127–131.

100 On Charles's devotion to the Magdalene and its political repercussions, see Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 307–22, esp. 309.

101 Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 41–42.

102 Saxer, *Le Dossier Vézelien*, 165; Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 131; Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 311.

103 On the presence of the mendicant orders in general in the Levant, see Derbes, *Picturing the Passion* (n. 53 above), 24–27; Derbes and Neff, "Italy, the Mendicant Orders"; P. Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean, 1204–1500* (London and New York, 1995), 230–33. More specifically on the Dominicans, C. Delacroix-Besnier, *Les Dominicains et la chrétienté grecque aux XIVe et XVe siècles*, Collection de l'École française de Rome 237 (Rome, 1997). On Charles II of Anjou, Lock, *Franks*, 92–97.

communications between the Roman and Orthodox churches, as was particularly the case at the Council of Lyon (1274).[104] More specifically, in the late thirteenth century, when the dispute over the relics of Magdalene was highly topical in the West, the Dominicans, who were directly involved in this conflict, were especially active in Constantinople. The historian Pachymeres tells us that they had "illicitly" set up a monastery in the city, which aroused the objections of the patriarch and caused the emperor Andronikos II himself to intervene. In 1307 he ordered their removal to the Galata area, where they had had a monastery dedicated to St. Paul since 1299, nowadays known as Arap Camii.[105]

Enhancing the Status of the Magdalene's Relics in Constantinople

The dispute in the West about the Magdalene's remains reveals how relics, as passive symbols, reflect the messages, the prestige, and the symbolism that each community attributes to them. Once disconnected from the surroundings that endow them with meaning, they are just ordinary remains, and thus worthless objects. Therefore it was essential to certify their authenticity. A reliquary with an inscription or an iconographic motif identifying the holy person, a document confirming the saint's identity, and, of course, a textual or oral tradition linking that specific object with one or more saints are proofs that give a relic its value and its special significance. Nevertheless, these external signs can disappear after periods of crisis, historical rupture, or changes in cultural values, or they can acquire a new

symbolic function, which once again comes entirely from their social surroundings. This is brought about by the reappearance, rediscovery, or translation of relics and the introduction of new external symbols.[106] In the case of Mary Magdalene in the West, for example, this function was performed on the one hand by the *dossier vézelien* and on the other by the gold reliquary and the glorious ceremony celebrating her rediscovery at St. Maximin.

Of all the external symbols, a written tradition is the most important way of ensuring continuity in the cult. As Patrick Geary has put it, "The *translatio* and the other hagiographic texts written about the saint are the means by which his identity is standardized and stabilized during this perilous move from an old to a new symbolic context."[107]

This is exactly what Xanthopoulos seems to have been trying to achieve in his text. In other words, he was trying to certify the authenticity of the Magdalene's Constantinopolitan relics at this historical juncture when the saint was being claimed by several suitors in the West. Because, apart from the two French monasteries, in the same period and for the first time the Roman basilica of St. John Lateran was also reported as possessing relics of the saint, which likely came from the sack of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade.[108]

Bearing in mind the fact that the city with what had once been the richest relic collection of the middle ages had, after 1204, lost the greater part of its sacred wealth, along with the topicality the Magdalene's relics had acquired, it seems clear that Xanthopoulos's aim in composing his encomium was to remind his congregation of the relics' existence and to give them meaning once again.

However, the choice of the Magdalene seems not to have been arrived at for these reasons alone. As mentioned above, until the late twelfth century the relics could not have been classed among the capital's popular

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104   D. J. Geanakoplos, "Bonaventura, the Two Mendicant Orders and the Greeks at the Council of Lyons (1274)," in idem, *Constantinople and the West: Essays on the Late Byzantine (Palaeologan) and Italian Renaissances and the Byzantine and Roman Churches* (Madison, WI, 1989), 196–210.

105   G. Pachymeres, *De Michaele et Andronico Palaeologis*, ed. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1835), 536–39. On the Dominicans in Constantinople, see R.-J. Loenertz, "Les établissements dominicains de Péra-Constantinople," in *Byzantina et franco-graeca* (Rome, 1970), 209–11; Delacroix-Besnier, *Les Dominicains*, 9–11. On the Arap Camii, W. Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls* (Tübingen, 1977), 79–80. On the wall paintings recently discovered in the church, see St. Westphalen, "Pittori greci nella chiesa dominicana dei Genovesi a Pera (Arap Camii)," in *Intorno al Sacro Volto: Genova, Bisanzio e il Mediterraneo (secoli XI–XIV)*, ed. A.-R. Calderoni Masetti, C. Dufour Bozzo, and Gerhard Wolf (Venice, 2007), 51–62.

106   On the theoretical treatment of relics as passive symbols, see Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 5–9.

107   Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 8.

108   Saxer thinks that these relics must have come from Constantinople, as he connects their appearance with the statement in the *Gesta episcoporum Halberstadensium* that among the relics he removed from Constantinople, the bishop of the city, Conrad de Krosik, helped himself [to] "de craneo Marie Magdalene" (see Riant, *Exuviae*, 1:21): Saxer, *Culte*, 218–19; Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 102, 108; Ludwig-Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 318.

treasures, given that only one of the twelve texts by visitors to Constantinople mentions them, and that was almost certainly a Latin translation of a Greek guide to the sacred sights of the city.[109] By contrast, five of the eleven travelers to the city after 1261 visited the monastery of St. Lazaros, and of them three mention the Magdalene's relics, in one case with the highly informative note that they were immured in a column in the sanctuary.[110]

Consequently, the case of the Magdalene confirms the ways in which, according to George Majeska, the sacred landscape of Constantinople changed after the city's recapture, that is to say, not with the rediscovery of plundered relics but by their replacement with others.[111] Thus Nikephoros's text is not intended simply as a reminder of the relics' existence; rather, it should be seen as part of a perceptible attempt to create newly important sacred treasures in the city after 1261 by focusing interest on relics that beforehand (that is, prior to the Latin conquest) had not been so significant or popular.

Thus Xanthopoulos's text was a response to the need to revive the cult of relics, which had been weakened after the Fourth Crusade by the plundering of the city's most important sacred treasures. Interpreting Xanthopoulos's encomium in this way is consistent with Alice-Mary Talbot's view on the phenomenon of the rewriting of earlier saints' lives by an educated elite in the Palaiologan period.[112] These revised hagiograph-

ical texts were most probably intended for public presentation, that is, to be read out in front of an audience, on the occasion of a saint's feast or the restoration of his or her church. One of the most common reasons Talbot found for Palaiologan intellectuals employing themselves in this way was in order to stress the existence and wonder-working activities of relics belonging to early saints in Constantinople. In addition, they were aiming to comment and take a stand on contemporary religious—and by extension political—issues, such as the Union of the Churches or Hesychasm.

Thus Xanthopoulos's *Life* of the Magdalene, as the work of an intellectual wanting to remind people of the relics of a saint previously little celebrated in Byzantium, and one who was being claimed at that time by the West, should no doubt be seen in the same context. The importance of laying claim to an apostolic saint impelled him not just to rewrite a hagiographical text in a more up-to-date version but to create a new and extensive life for the Magdalene. Moreover, as he mentions at the end of his homily, she and Lazaros were "unsleeping guardians of the city, saviors who grant favors of all sorts and act as highly effective intercessors with God, because there is no one more cherished than a disciple and a friend!"[113]

Apart from the relevance her relics acquired in Xanthopoulos's time, the choice of the Magdalene may be accounted for by the special interest that seems likely to have grown up around the saint in Constantinople during the Latin occupation of the city. This is because we know that the monastery of St. Lazaros had come under the jurisdiction of Western monks,[114] and we can assume that Western visitors and pilgrims would have expected to find there the myrrophore for whom they reserved special veneration. This particular interest can probably be seen in the reference in a Western source to a church dedicated to the Magdalene in the capital, a church that, as mentioned above (282), we know did not exist beforehand in the city.[115]

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109 See above, n. 71.

110 On visitors to the city after 1261 who have left us descriptions, see Majeska, "Relics of Constantinople" (n. 70 above), 185 n. 15. Of the five texts by Russians, three mention a visit to the St. Lazaros monastery and one refers to the Magdalene's relics. The others note that the relics of his sister Mary are located in the church: G. P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, DOS 19 (Washington, DC, 1984), 379–81; idem, "Russian Pilgrims in Constantinople" (n. 72 above), 101. The anonymous Armenian pilgrim places the Magdalene's relics in the "Lady Martha" Monastery: S. P. Brock, "A Medieval Armenian Pilgrim's Description of Constantinople," *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, n.s., 4 (1967): 88. See also Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, 381 n. 114. Finally the Nestorian monk Rabban Sauma also refers to the Magdalene's relics without any mention of a specific location: S. P. Brock, "Rabban Sauma at Constantinople (1287)," in *Memorial Mgr. Gabriel Khouri-Sarkis* (Louvain, 1969), 246, 250.

111 Majeska, "Relics of Constantinople," 188.

112 A.-M. Talbot, "Old Wine in New Bottles: The Rewriting of Saints' Lives in the Paleologan Period," in *The Twilight of Byzantium:*

Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Late Byzantine Empire, ed. S. Ćurčić and D. Mouriki (Princeton, 1991), 15–26.

113 "φύλακες μὲν τῆς πόλεως ἄγρυπνοι, σωτῆρες δὲ καὶ χορηγοὶ χαρισμάτων τῶν παντοίων, ... καὶ πρὸς Θεὸν μεσῖται ἀνυστικώτατοι, εἴ γε μαθητοῦ καὶ φίλου μηδὲν οἰκειότερον," PG 147:573D–575A.

114 R. Janin, "Les sanctuaires de Byzance sous la domination latine (1204–1261)," *Études Byzantines* 2 (1944): 174.

115 Janin, "Les sanctuaires de Byzance," 168. The only likely explanation is that the monastery of St. Lazaros is meant.

Finally, the question as to what impact Xantho-poulos's efforts are likely to have made is a difficult one to answer, because the text has not been fully studied from a philological point of view: we do not know in how many manuscripts it survives nor exactly who its intended readership was. Nevertheless, Xanthopoulos appears to have played a key role in promoting new cults in Constantinople during the reign of Andronikos II. The contribution his writings made toward establish-ing the monastery of the Zoodochos Pege as a center of pilgrimage and healing in this period, where at the same time a new devotional type of the Virgin was cre-ated, lends credence to the supposition that the *Life* of the Magdalene was likewise intended to contrib-ute to the saint's cult and by extension to promote the church of St. Lazaros.[116] The resulting emphasis on the Magdalene as a holy figure, on her relics, and on the church where she was venerated, was, I believe, subse-quently "translated" into the figure depicted as mourn-ing in a similarly emphatic manner in the Palaiologan scenes of the Passion.[117]

The Magdalene between East and West

From this analysis it seems that, given the disputes in the West involving the Magdalene, Xanthopoulos was trying through his text to help create a new devotional site in Constantinople. The fact that he makes studious efforts to distinguish the Magdalene from the "com-posite" Western saint reinforces this view. For example,

he devotes many lines to stressing that she had been a young girl from a good home and had led "an exalted life inspired by God,"[118] while explicitly distinguishing her from Mary, the sister of Lazaros, with whom, as he tells us, she was close friends.[119]

The way in which he handles the subject recalls the case of Gerard of Nazareth. As mentioned above, when the Latin bishop faced a similar challenge, that is, attempting to promote the Latin monastery of Bethany as the Magdalene's cult center par excellence in the Holy Land, he composed a series of homilies that served exactly the same function as Xanthopoulos's text: they safeguarded the identity of the authentic saint and distinguished her from the "imitation" saint of the other religious tradition.

Thus Xanthopoulos's text clarifies the identity of the Orthodox Magdalene, and it is no accident that this same identity is adopted faithfully in the mourn-ing myrrophore in Byzantine art: to be specific, in all the Byzantine scenes mentioned above (275–79), the Magdalene is depicted in the same way (i.e., wearing the same clothes) as the other women, and nowhere is she represented with any of the iconographic features of the sinner saint of the West.[120]

Nor is it by chance that, alongside this "Orthodox" Magdalene, the Western version of her iconography—the penitent sinner—appears in scenes of the Passion at about the same time in provincial painted programs in Latin-occupied southern Greece. In particular we find the myrrophore, who is lamenting and tearing out her hair while standing apart from the other figures of the scene, depicted dressed in a red maphorion and with fair hair, in the Lamentations at the Omorphe

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116 A.- M. Talbot, "Epigrams of Manuel Philes on the Theotokos tes Peges and its Art," *DOP* 48 (1994): 136–38; eadem, "Two Accounts of Miracles at the Pege Shrine" (n. 82 above), 610; N. Teteriatnikov, "The Image of the Virgin Zoodochos Pege: Two Questions Concerning its Origin," in *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. M. Vassilaki (Aldershot, 2005), 225–38.

117 It is also very likely that Xanthopoulos's interest was behind the Magdalene's appearance in other scenes in Palaiologan imag-ery, such as the encounter with the risen Christ, the well-known *Noli me tangere*, a scene which also became particularly popular in this period. On its iconography, see A. Kalliga-Yeroulanou, "Η σκηνή του 'Μή μου ἅπτου' ὅπως εμφανίζεται σε βυζαντινά μνημεία και η μορφή που παίρνει στον 16° αιώνα," *Δελτ.Χριστ.Ἀρχ.Ἑτ.* 3 (1962–3), 203–27; K. Wessel, "Erscheinungen des Auferstandenen," *RbK* 2:382–83. However, I think the *Noli me tangere* must also be con-nected with the Hesychasts' theological debates, as it was one of the main issues for Gregory Palamas; see, for example, Ὁμιλία Κ': Εἰς τὸν εὐαγγελιστὴν Ἰωάννην ὄγδοον ἑωθινὸν Εὐαγγέλιον, PG 151:265–74, *BHG* 1162C, though it is not possible to discuss this at length here.

118 "βίον ἔνθεον τε καὶ ὑψηλόν," PG 147:545B–48C.

119 PG 147:553C.

120 The Olympiotissa in Elassona is an exception, where the female figure tearing her hair out has her head uncovered and wears a red maphorion. However, in this particular scene the three myrro-phores are all bare-headed and wear different colored maphoria, so that the choice of red and the uncovered hair could be a coincidence (see n. 23 above). Mention should be made here of the Lamentation in the main church of the Vatopedi Monastery (1312): see Tsigaridas, "Τα ψηφιδωτά και οι βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες" (n. 27 above), 238, fig. 197, in which two intensely mourning myrrophores stand out from the group of women, one of whom wears a bright red maphorion and is tearing at her fair hair. However, it is highly likely that the strong colors are due to later repainting; see Tsigaridas, ibid., 238–40.

Ekklesia on Aegina (1289)[121] and the Church of the Transfiguration in Pyrgi on Euboia (1296; fig. 9).[122] She appears with head uncovered, so that her fair or reddish hair stands out, at a series of monuments in Venetian Crete, such as St. Anthony in Sougia (1385) and the Panagia Church in Anisaraki (Selino) in the district of Chania (ca. 1380),[123] St. John in Margarites (1383), and at the eponymous church in Agia Triada in the district of Rethymnon (figs. 10–11).[124] She is also represented with the same characteristics, that is, the red maphorion and the long fair hair, in the Lamentation at St. Constantine in Pyrgos, Monophatsi (1314/15), where we observe another detail that is very reminiscent of the Sinai Crusader icon (see above, 271–72): the open garment with the sleeves rolled back, revealing her inner garment and her arms up to the elbows (fig. 12).[125]

The question as to what extent the creators of these scenes—and their public—were aware that they were depicting a version of the saint alien to their own religious tradition is a difficult one to answer. In any event, it seems that they identified this figure with the Magdalene, as we discover from the scene of the Lamentation at the Church of Our Saviour in Kephale, Chania (1319–20), where she is depicted in the center of the scene with the same features and tearing at her hair, accompanied by the inscription: "Η Μαρία Μαγδαληνή" (Mary Magdalene; fig. 13).[126] Another query raised by the western Magdalenes found in these provincial Lamentation scenes is: How did the artists

FIG. 9   Lamentation, Omorphe Ekklesia, Aigina (1289). Photo: author

come into contact with the Western or Crusader works that they used for models?

This question may prompt the understandable reaction that, because these were Latin-dominated areas, it is entirely natural that such works, and perhaps even handbooks with drawings depicting the iconography of the Magdalene as penitent sinner, should be in circulation.[127] Nevertheless, the host of examples and the more-or-less simultaneous spread of the subject throughout the eastern Mediterranean—in Crusader art, in Frankish southern Greece, and in Venetian Crete—and in Italy cannot be attributed simply to the circulation of artworks and painter's manuals or to the presence of Western artists,[128] or even to the mixed workshops that probably operated in these areas.[129] If

121 V. A. Foskolou, "Απεικονίσεις του Παναγίου Τάφου και οι συμβολικές προεκτάσεις τους κατά την ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο," Δελτ.Χριστ.Αρχ.Ετ. 25 (2004): 226, figs. 1–2.

122 A. Koumoussi, Les peintures murales de la Transfiguration de Pyrgi et de Saint-Thècle en Eubée: Rapports avec l'art occidental (Athens, 1987), 92, 284, pl. 25.

123 K. Lassithiotakis, "Εκκλησίες της Δυτικής Κρήτης: Επαρχία Σελίνο," Κρ.Χρον. 22 (1970): 385–87, 191–97, figs. 258–261.

124 In fact in the last two examples, which follow the same iconographic model, the female figure is depicted apart from the group of other women, tearing her hair with one hand and scratching her face with the other. See I. Spatharakis, Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete: Rethymnon Province (London, 1999), 1:41, pl. 3b; idem, Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete (Leiden, 2001), no. 44, 124–26, fig. 113.

125 For the monument, see M. Vassilaki, "Εικονογραφικοί κύκλοι από τη ζωή του Μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου σε εκκλησίες της Κρήτης," Κρητική Εστία 1 (1987): 60–84, esp. 64–70; Spatharakis, Dated, no. 12, 36–39.

126 Spatharakis, Dated, no. 18, 56–58.

127 On the question of painters' manuals in Byzantium and in the West, see R. W. H. P. Scheller, Exemplum: Model-Book Drawings and the Practice of Artistic Transmission in the Middle Ages (ca. 900–ca. 1470) (Amsterdam, 1995).

128 On documentary evidence confirming the presence of Western painters in Crete, see M. Catepan, "Nuovi documenti riguardanti pittori cretesi dal 1300 al 1500," in Πεπραγμένα του Β' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου (Athens, 1968), 3:29–46; idem, "Nuovi elenchi e documenti dei pittori in Creta dal 1300 al 1500," Thesaurismata 9 (1972): 202–35; M. Vassilaki, "Η Κρήτη υπό Βενετική κυριαρχία: Η μαρτυρία των μνημείων του 13ου αιώνα," in Byzantine Art in the Aftermath of the Fourth Crusade: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences; International Congress, March 9–12, 2004, ed. P. L. Vocotopoulos (Athens, 2007), 40.

129 On the likelihood of a Byzantine artist collaborating with a Western artist on a painted church in Crete, see S. Papadaki-Oekland, "Δυτικότροπες τοιχογραφίες του 14ου αιώνα στην Κρήτη:

FIG. 10
Lamentation, Panayia
Church in Anisaraki,
Selino, Chania, Crete (ca.
1380). Photo: Guanela
Archive, History and
Archaeology Department,
University of Crete

FIG. 11
Lamentation, Ayia
Triada, Rethymnon,
Crete. Photo: author

FIG. 12   Lamentation, St. Constantine in Pyrgos, Monophatsi, Crete (1314/15). Photo: Guanela Archive, History and Archaeology Department, University of Crete

Detail of fig. 12

FIG. 13   Lamentation, Church of Our Saviour, Kefali, Chania, Crete (1319–20). Photo: Guanela Archive, History and Archaeology Department, University of Crete

FIG. 14   Crucifixion, St. John, Selli, Crete (1411). Photo: Guanela Archive, History and Archaeology Department, University of Crete

FIG. 15   Mary Magdalene at the foot of the cross, detail of Crucifixion, St. Stephen in Kastri, Mylopotamos (1391). Photo: Guanela Archive, History and Archaeology Department, University of Crete

one considers that this was a subject with, as has been shown, distinct ideological connotations and a particular religious orientation, such explanations seem even more inadequate.

Yet another Western-style rendering of the Magdalene may guide our search toward a likely answer. This is the motif of the kneeling Magdalene, embracing the foot of the cross, which appears in the Crucifixion scenes at two monuments, St. Stephen in Kastri, Mylopotamos (1391) and St. John in Selli (1411), both in Crete (figs. 14–15).[130] The veneration of the crucified Christ is unknown to Byzantine iconography of the scene, but, as has been mentioned above, it was a depiction of the Magdalene identified above all with

the Franciscans and, in more general terms, with the mendicant orders.[131]

The presence of the friars in Frankish southern Greece and, especially, in Venetian Crete is borne out by a great deal of historical evidence, too much to expand on in the limited space of this paper.[132] Their contri-

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Η *ἄλλη ὄψη μιας αμφίδρομης σχέσης;*" in *Ευφρόσυνον: Αφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη* (Athens, 1992), 2:491–516, esp. 508–13.

130   Spatharakis, *Rethymnon Province*, figs. 314, 353. For the monuments, see Spatharakis, *Dated*, no. 48, 142–44, no. 54, 163–66. It is important to note that at Agios Stephanos in Kastri, the sinful Magdalene with the loose, fair hair is also depicted in the scene of the Lamentation.

131   It is highly likely that the motif of the Magdalene at the foot of the cross also had political connotations: the theme is depicted in two very interesting polyptychs, the Polesden Lacey triptych and the Sterbini diptych, both recently attributed to a Greek artist working for important members of the Angevin dynasty by Rebecca Corrie. See "The Polesden Lacey Triptych and the Sterbini Diptych: A Greek Painter between East and West," in *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, vol. 3, *Abstracts of Communications* (Aldershot, 2006), 47–48. These works are contemporary and have clear links with the mendicant orders, especially the Franciscans: the Polesden Lacey triptych includes SS. Francis and Dominic among its saints, and the Sterbini diptych depicts the Stigmatization of St. Francis under the Magdalene at the foot of the cross; see M. S. Frinta, "Searching for an Adriatic Painting Workshop with Byzantine Connection," *Zograf* 18 (1987): 12–20 and figs. 1, 5. On the Sterbini diptych, see Garrison, *Index* (n. 16 above), no. 247.

132   It is sufficient to note that, among the many Dominican foundations in Crete, reference is made to a monastery dedicated to

bution to the spreading of iconographic subjects and, more generally, of a "Western" aesthetic in Frankish southern Greece, however, remains to be more extensively researched.[133] Iconographic subjects, such as the sinful Magdalene, which, as has been shown, has ideological links with the teachings of the Franciscans and is connected with the claims of the Dominicans, can serve as a central point in this research.

A study of this kind on the monuments of Crete and southern Greece could prove particularly productive because: (1) generally speaking, the Magdalene is not the only Western presence identified in such painted programs,[134] and (2) these works have an established provenance and public, and in some cases known patrons and painters. In other words they can be identified with specific historical contexts, unlike, for example, the Sinai Crusader icons, which, as portable objects, still leave many of these questions unanswered.

To sum up, the presence of the sinful Magdalene in Latin-ruled areas at a time when her Orthodox alter ego was appearing in texts and art in Byzantine territory shows that it is not just another iconographic detail that can be dismissed as superficial "Western influence." Such a one-dimensional characterization would obscure the multiplicity of possible interpretations. A study of the programs in which she appears, combined with a historical interpretation of similar

iconographic features that are described in scholarly research as "Western influence," especially if that study were to go beyond the obvious explanations related to the Latin conquest,[135] could overturn the entrenched view that, in the Latin-occupied areas of the Byzantine territory, "at the artistic level substantial Western influences were kept at arm's length and were not allowed to interfere with the 'purity' of the character of the Byzantine iconography."[136]

University of Crete
Department of History and
    Archaeology
Rethymnon Campus
GR 74100 Rethymnon
Greece
foskolou@phl.uoc.gr

135   For such an approach see V. A. Foskolou, "'Δυτικές επιδράσεις' στην τέχνη της λατινοκρατούμενης Ανατολής: Μια πρόταση ιστορικής ανάγνωσης," in *Ψηφίδες: Μελέτες Ιστορίας, Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης στη μνήμη της Στέλλας Παπαδάκη-Oekland*, ed. O. Gratsiou and C. Loukos (Athens, 2009), 145–55.

136   The quote comes from A. Lymberopoulou, and refers in particular to 14th-c. Crete. I cite it because it is indicative of a more widely held view on the subject, i.e., that Western influences on Cretan art are confined to certain secondary iconographic details, mainly of a pragmatic nature; see "'Fish on a Dish' and its Table Companions in Fourteenth-Century Wall-Paintings on Venetian-Dominated Crete," in *Eat, Drink and Be Merry (Luke 12:19): Food and Wine in Byzantium*, ed. L. Brubaker and K. Linardou (Aldershot, 2007) 223–32, at 228. See also M. Georgopoulou, "Venice and the Byzantine Sphere," in *Byzantium: Faith and Power* (n. 1 above), 492; M. Vassilakis-Mavrakakis, "Western Influence on the Fourteenth Century Art of Crete," *Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress, Akten*, vol. 2.5 [=*JÖB*, 32, no. 5 (1982)], 301–11; eadem, "Καθημερινή ζωή και πραγματικότητα στη Βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη: Η μαρτυρία των τοιχογραφημένων εκκλησιών," in *Ενθύμησις Νικολάου M. Παναγιωτάκη* (Heraklion, 2000), 57–79. In a later article, although Vassilaki maintains that the Western features which appear in the 14th c. show a greater degree of assimilation in both iconographic and stylistic characteristics, she still cites only secondary iconographic details, mainly of a pragmatic nature: see "Κρήτη υπό Βενετική κυριαρχία," 38–39.

the Magdalene in the town of Rethymnon: Delacroix-Besnier, *Les dominicains*, 7.

133   A. Derbes has looked at this from the other side, i.e., their role in the adoption of Byzantine iconographic motifs into scenes of the Passion in *dugento* art: see *Picturing the Passion* (n. 53 above).

134   See, for example, the Western features in the Church of Our Saviour in Kephale, Chania: Spatharakis, *Dated*, 58. On Pyrgos (Monophatsi), see Vassilaki, "Κρήτη υπό Βενετική κυριαρχία," 38. On the Omorphe Ekklesia in Aegina and finally on the Metamorphosis Church at Pyrgi on Euboia, see Koumousi, *Les peintures murales de la Transfiguration de Pyrgi*, 267–89 and V. Foskolou, "Η Ομορφή Εκκλησιά στην Αίγινα: Εικονογραφική και Τεχνοτροπική Ανάλυση των Τοιχογραφιών" (Ph.D. diss., Athens University, 2000).

Appendix: References to the Magdalene's Relics in Byzantine Sources

I. Chronicles—Historiographical Works

A. TENTH CENTURY

1. Georgius Continuatus (= Georgius Monachus), *Vitae recentiorum imperatorum,* ed. I. Bekker, *Theophanes Continuatus*, CSHB (Bonn, 1838), 860:

> ὡσαύτως ἔκτισεν ἐκκλησίαν εἰς τοὺς λεγομένους τόπους, τὸν ἅγιον Λάζαρον, κατασκευάσας αὐτὴν μονὴν ἀνδρείαν εὐνούχων. ἔνθα καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἁγίου Λαζάρου σῶμα ἐκ Κύπρου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς ἀπὸ Ἐφέσου ἀνακομίσας ἀπέθετο, ποιήσας καὶ τὰ ἐγκαίνια τῆς αὐτῆς ἐκκλησίας.

2. Symeon Logothetes (= Leon Grammaticus), *Chronographia*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1842), 274:

> ὡσαύτως ἔκτισεν εἰς τοὺς λεγομένους τόπους τὸν ἅγιον Λάζαρον, κατασκευάσας μονὴν ἀνδρείαν εὐνούχων, ἔνθα καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Λαζάρου σῶμα καὶ Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς ἀνακομίσας ἀπέθετο, ποιήσας καὶ τὰ ἐγκαίνια τῆς αὐτῆς ἐκκλησίας.

3. Theophanes Continuatus, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1838), 364–65:

> ἔκτισεν δὲ καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἁγίου Λαζάρου ἐκκλησίαν τῶν λεγομένων τόπων, καὶ μονὴν ἀνδρῶν εὐνούχων ἐν αὐτῇ κατεσκεύασεν· ἔνθα καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἁγίου Λαζάρου σῶμα καὶ τῆς ἀδελφῆς αὐτοῦ Μαγδαληνῆς ἀνακομίσας ἀπέθετο.

4. Pseudo-Symeon (Symeon Magister), *Annales*, ed. I. Bekker, *Theophanes Continuatus,* CSHB (Bonn, 1838), 704:

> Τῷ ιγ' αὐτοῦ ἔτει κτίζει ὁ βασιλεὺς εἰς τοὺς λεγομένους τόπους ναὸν ἅγιον Λάζαρον, καὶ κατασκευάζει μονὴν ἀνδρῴαν εὐνούχων ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἁγίου Λαζάρου σῶμα καὶ Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς ἀπέθετο.

B. ELEVENTH, TWELFTH, AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

1. Ioannes Skylitzes (second half of eleventh century), ed. J. Thurn, *Ioannis Scylitzae synopsis historiarum,* CFHB Series Berolinensis 5 (Berlin, 1973), 180–81:

> ἀνήγειρε δὲ καὶ ναὸν ἄλλον κατὰ τοὺς τόπους εἰς ὄνομα τοῦ ἁγίου Λαζάρου, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἁγίου μετακομίσας ἀπέθετο σῶμα, καὶ τῆς ἀδελφῆς αὐτοῦ Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς.

Skylitzes is copied by twelfth- and thirteenth-century chroniclers, such as:

2. George Kedrenos, *Compendium historiarum*, ed. I. Bekker, *Georgius Cedrenus Ioannis Scylitzae ope*, CSHB (Bonn, 1839), 2:260:

> ἀνήγειρε δὲ καὶ ναὸν ἄλλον κατὰ τοὺς τόπους εἰς ὄνομα τοῦ ἁγίου Λαζάρου, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἁγίου μετακομίσας ἀπέθετο σῶμα, καὶ τῆς ἀδελφῆς αὐτοῦ Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς, ἐξ Ἐφέσου μετακομίσας.

3. Ioannis Zonaras, ed. L. Dindorf, *Ioannis Zonarae epitome historiarum*, 3 vols., CSHB (Leipzig, 1871), 3:42:

> καὶ ἐπ' ὀνόματι τοῦ ἁγίου Λαζάρου ναὸν ἐδείματο ἕτερον, εἰς ὃν καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἐκείνου σῶμα ἀπεθησαύρισεν ἐκ τῆς Κύπρου μετενεχθέν, ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τὸ τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς Μαρίας.

4. Theodoros Skoutariotes, *Ἀνωνύμου Σύνοψις Χρονική*, ed. K. N. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 7 (Paris, 1894), 147:

> Ἀνεγείρει δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Λέων τὸν περικαλλῆ ναὸν τοῦ ἁγίου Λαζάρου ποιήσας καὶ τὴν ἀνακομιδὴν τῶν ἁγίων λειψάνων τοῦ ἁγίου Λαζάρου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ καταθέμενος, μετ' ὀλίγον ἀπεβίω.

II. Patria text

Patria of Constantinople, ed. T. Preger, *Scriptores
Originum Constantinopolitanarum* (Leipzig, 1989),
288 (see also A. Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria
Konstantinupoleos,* Poikila Byzantina 8 [Bonn, 1988],
383–84):

Ὁ δὲ ἅγιος Λάζαρος ἐκτίσθη παρὰ Λέοντος
υἱοῦ Βασιλείου καὶ κτήματα πολλὰ ἐκεῖσε
ἀπεχαρίσατο. Ἔφερε δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς Κύπρου καὶ
τὰ ἅγια λείψανα τοῦ ἁγίου Λαζάρου καὶ ἀπὸ
Βηθανίας τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας τῆς μυροφόρου καὶ
ἐκεῖσε ἀποτίθεται αὐτά.

Historical works which are more or less contem-
porary with the translation, i.e., tenth-century texts,
refer to the relics of Mary Magdalene and Lazaros, but
only in one case is the Magdalene mentioned as his sis-
ter. The historical texts of the twelfth century, by con-
trast, depending on which earlier text they are using as
a source, either mention the two saints without mak-
ing any connections between them or assume that the
Magdalene was Lazaros's sister. Unlike in the *patria*
tradition, the Magdalene is referred to as St. Mary the
Myrrophore from Bethany, a provenance that suggests
some relationship between the Magdalene and Lazaros.